



The Fourth Power: A Grand Strategy for the United States in the Twenty-First Century

Gary Hart

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Today, even as America asserts itself globally, it lacks a grand strategy to replace containment of communism. In this short, sharp book, Gary Hart outlines a new grand strategy, one directing Americas powers to the achievement of its large purposes. Central to this strategy is the power of American ideals, what Hart calls the fourth power. Constitutional liberties, representative government, press freedom - these and other democratic principles, attractive to peoples worldwide, constitute a resource that may prove as important to national security and the national interest in this dangerous new century as traditional military, economic and political might. Writes Hart: The idea that government exists to protect, not oppress, the individual has an enormous power not fully understood by most Americans who take this principle for granted from birth. Far more nations will follow us because of the power of this ideal than the might of all our weapons. Against those who view Americas noblest values as an inconvenience or even hindrance to the exertion of influence abroad, Hart warns that we ignore principle only at our peril. Such an approach may serve short-term goals, but there are costs; among them is the compromising of a crucial strategic asset, Americas fourth power. Certain objectives require a military response--few serious people would disagree. The question is whether Americas purposes are best achieved through empire and force or through principle and persuasion. To suggest the former, Hart argues, is to misread both history and our current revolutionary age, one where terrorism, the internationalization of markets, information technology, eroding nation-state authority and other realities demand not doctrines of superstate unilateralism and preemption but rather appreciation for new collective security structures, international regulatory bodies, even forms of collaborative sovereignty. Applying the best insights of strategy to statecraft, Hart finds fuzziness, overreaching, and theological simplicity in Americas current foreign policy. Nor does he believe the war on terror, necessary in the near term, will itself serve to chart Americas larger strategic course. A bracing vision of an America responsive to a full spectrum of global challenges, The Fourth Power calls for a deeper understanding both of the threats we face and the profound strengths at our disposal to fight them.



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